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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
29 October 1963

State Department review completed

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Situation in the Congo

1. Following the proclamation of a state of emergency in Leopoldville on 20 October, full authority has been in the hands of a tough, pro-Western three-man committee representing the army and police --the essential power elements in the Congo. As long as this group remains together, it is likely to prevail over the striking labor unions and agitating leftists.

2. The emergency committee consists of Defense Minister Anany, Justice Minister Bomboko, and Interior Minister Maboti. Surete chief Nendaka and Interior Ministry official Kandolo are active behind the scenes, and army chief Mobutu is closely supporting the group and participating in its decisions. The group is tough and relatively able; Ambassador Gullion feels it may have a tendency to be arbitrary and totalitarian. Although the committee nominally has authority only for the city of Leopoldville, premier Adoula for the moment appears to have been shunted aside and the committee is making the major decisions for the Congo Government. Parliament, having been prorogued in late September, represents no present threat.

3. Establishment of the cabal arose out of mounting feeling in Leopoldville that during Adoula's absence in the United States in mid-October, labor agitation and resurgence of antigovernment activity by Gizengist and Lumumbist leftist elements might get out of control. Last August's labor-instigated upheaval across the river in Brazzaville which ousted the Youlou government gave rise to fears that a similar chain of events might transpire in Leopoldville. At the same time, the cabal members have long been critical of Adoula as indecisive.

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4. The only threat to the committee's remaining in power would be the loss of its control over the army and police. This control is likely to be threatened only in the event of massive civil disturbances when orders to shoot might be ignored by the army or police.

5. The present labor situation could produce such a threat. Although based on economic grievances, the labor agitation has taken on more and more political overtones, including repeated calls for a total change of government. The committee's arrest of labor leaders on 24-25 October appears to have undercut the agitation at least temporarily; a strike by civil servants on 23 October has petered out. A teachers' strike is continuing, however, and the arrests may yet provoke more disturbances. Should the agitation balloon into a general strike, the government might be hard pressed to bring it under control. Embassy officials think that army support of the government would crumble fairly quick if such a strike persisted.

6. Vocal leftist political elements--the Gizengists and Lumumbists--serve as a constant disruptive element but constitute more of a potential threat than a present one. They almost certainly receive assistance from the Soviet bloc; in a move to cut off such aid, the ruling committee

has decided to break relations with bloc countries represented in the Congo (USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria). At the moment, there has been no follow through on this decision. Exiled leftists are currently having some success in Brazzaville, and have obtained use of the official Congo (Brazzaville) radio station there with which they are trying to incite the Leopoldville population. There is some evidence they have made inroads into Mobutu's supposedly elite and dependable paracommando units.

7. The central government still lacks the means with which to enforce its decisions outside the capital. Leopoldville's authority is limited among the 21 squabbling provincial tribal fiefdoms which are involved in internal power struggles and quarrels over contested territories. The poorly disciplined army, though improving, is more often a cause of disorder than an instrument of law and order. The long discussed foreign

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retraining program, largely under Belgian aegis, is only now getting underway, and not many units are likely to be trained by next June when UN forces leave.

8. The chaotic economic situation may improve if the emergency committee goes along with stringent financial and monetary reforms the Adoula government had been discussing with the US, Belgium, and the International Monetary Fund. These involve establishing tighter controls over the budget and foreign exchange expenditure, taking steps to correct the severe trade imbalance and to combat widespread smuggling and corruption, and devaluing the Congo franc (now officially 65 to \$1, black-market almost 400 to \$1). Curbing high unemployment, food shortages, and price inflation in Leopoldville are the most pressing problems.

9. Tshombe remains in self-imposed exile in Barcelona, and is unlikely to return without guarantees from Leopoldville. Should he do so, he could become a considerable political threat. He is still immensely popular in Katanga, and his henchmen are in control of two of the three provinces into which Katanga has been split. For the present, however, his capabilities seem limited, for his financial base is gone and his army has broken up into a series of small uncoordinated bands whose main activity is banditry.

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